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The Supplemental Appropriations bill included provisions to provide a 13 week extension of unemployment benefits for those workers who are unable to find a job in today's struggling economy. The need for action is clear. For the fifth straight month, the economy lost jobs and unemployment rose from 5.0% in April to 5.5% in May, with 49,000 jobs lost in May alone-the largest monthly spike in 22 years. The economy has lost nearly 325,000 jobs this year and 1.6 million Americans have been unemployed more than six months, despite looking for work.

“Families are hurting. Ohio has lost 1,320 jobs each month for the past six months,” Wilson said. “Extending unemployment benefits just makes sense. It's good for families and good for the economy. The Congressional Budget Office says extending unemployment benefits is one of the quickest, most cost-effective ways to stimulate the economy because the money is spent quickly.”

In addition the legislation included an expanded GI Bill. The measure will restore full, four-year college scholarships to veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars which will help make them part of an economic recovery like the veterans of World War II. The legislation will also allow veterans to transfer those benefits to family members.

More than 53,450 troops from Ohio have been deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan. Unfortunately, current benefits pay only about 70 percent of a public college education and 30 percent of a private college education for these veterans when they return home.

“Since World War II, our nation has offered college assistance to returning vets. For every dollar we invested in our veterans, seven dollars was generated,” Wilson said. “Still the program needed to be updated. Education is more expensive today. Our courageous war veterans deserve the best we can give them.”

The legislation approved by the House last night also includes \$161.8 billion that will support the cost of military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan through the summer of 2009.

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